



Montana
Office of Public Instruction
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent

Office of Public Instruction
P.O. Box 202501
Helena, MT, 59620-2501
(406) 444-3095
(888) 231-9393
(406) 444-0169 (TTY)
opi.mt.gov



TO: Montana Educators
FROM: Judy Snow, State Assessment Director
Frank Podobnik, Special Education Director
RE: Eligibility Guidelines for MontCAS Alternate Assessments
DATE: February 2016

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that “The state has established goals for the performance of children with disabilities in the state that are consistent, to the maximum extent appropriate, with other goals and standards for children established by the state.” IDEA further requires that all students be included in the state’s accountability systems.

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires that all students reach high standards and further establishes the requirements for participation and accountability for all students in state assessments used to determine adequate yearly progress (AYP). The following are options for participation in MontCAS assessments:

- Student takes the general CRT, Smarter, ACT, or ELP (English Language Proficiency) tests with no accommodations
- Student takes the general CRT, Smarter, ACT, or ELP (English Language Proficiency) tests with the use of accommodations
- Student takes the alternate assessment

The decisions as to whether a student with disabilities will participate in the general or the alternate assessments and what accommodations, if any, are to be provided to the student must be documented in the student’s IEP prior to the administration of assessments.

For students, who as a result of their disability cannot participate in the state’s general assessment, the state education agency (Montana Office of Public Instruction) is required to construct and implement guidelines for their participation in an alternate test. Montana meets this requirement through the following alternate assessments the results of which will be included in the state accountability system on a yearly basis.

- Science CRT-Alternate in grades 4, 8, and 10
- MSAA ELA and Math Alternate in grade 3-8, and 11
- WIDA, English Language Proficiency test, *Access for ELLs*, Alternate for English Language Learners (ELLs), grades K-12.

Eligibility Criteria Worksheet
MontCAS Alternate Assessments

This form is intended to assist IEP teams in determining whether the student should participate in the general or alternate assessments and to address documentation requirements under IDEA. The IEP team must decide which MontCAS assessments (general or alternate) the student will participate in. When completed, this form must be attached to the student's IEP.

Student:_____ **District:**_____ **Grade/Age:**_____

For each of the statements below, circle yes or no		
Does the student have an active IEP and receive services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)?	YES	NO
Do the student's demonstrated cognitive abilities and adaptive behavior require substantial adjustments to the general curriculum?	YES	NO
Do the student's learning objectives and expected outcomes focus on functional application of skills, as illustrated in the student's IEP's annual goals and short-term objectives?	YES	NO
Does the student require direct and extensive instruction to acquire, maintain, generalize and transfer new skills?	YES	NO

If you answer "NO" to any of the above questions, the student must participate in the general CRT. If all answers are yes, the student is eligible to take the alternate and considered to be a student with a significant cognitive disability.

The decision to determine a student's eligibility to participate in the CRT-Alternate may not be based on:

- Excessive or extended absence;
- Disability category;
- Social, cultural or economic difference;
- The amount of time receiving special education services; and
- Academic achievement significantly lower than his or her same age peers.

NOTES:

- If a special education student is in grade 3-8 or 10 or in an ungraded program and is of the chronological age of a 3-8 or grade 10 or 11 student, the student's special education teacher must review the student's current IEP to ensure that the IEP appropriately documents the student's participation in the general or alternate assessment.
- In addition, students who are designated as Limited English Proficient (LEP) and also meet the criteria to participate in an alternate assessment are required to participate in ELP test for as long as they are designated as LEP in grades K-12. This means that IEP teams need to take extra care to consider statewide assessment participation for students who meet the criteria in all grades and document participation in the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs in the IEP.
- If the student's IEP does not include all of the required assessment documentation for the alternates and/or it is felt that the student may participate in the assessments in a different manner than was previously determined (e.g., instead of an alternate, the student can participate in the general assessment with or without accommodations), the IEP team must reconvene to address how the student will participate. It is permissible to hold this IEP meeting through a teleconference call with IEP team participants.
- Students who are eligible for the MontCAS alternate assessments must participate in all of them and in all content areas offered.
- If you have a student who is eligible to take the alternate assessments, mark the Alternate Assessment checkbox under the **Statewide Assessments editor** in your AIM system. For students who are both eligible to take the alternate assessments and are designated as Limited English Proficient (LEP), please indicate LEP in AIM and also mark the Alternate Assessment checkbox.

Statewide Assessments

The student will participate in the Statewide assessments in the following manner:
(Check one box for each test.)

☐ N/A

☐ Without Accommodations

☐ With Accommodations

☒ Alternate Assessment

Test Name:

Contact Information:

Special Education Division

Frank Podobnik, fpodobnik@mt.gov 406-444-4428

Mary Graff, mgraфф@mt.gov 406-444-0685

Assessment Office

Judy Snow, jsnow@mt.gov or 406-444-3656

Yvonne Field, yfield@mt.gov or 406-444-0748

Angie Koehler, akoehler2@mt.gov or 406-444-3511